

# The Misrepresentation of Students of Color (SoC) in Special Education

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## PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

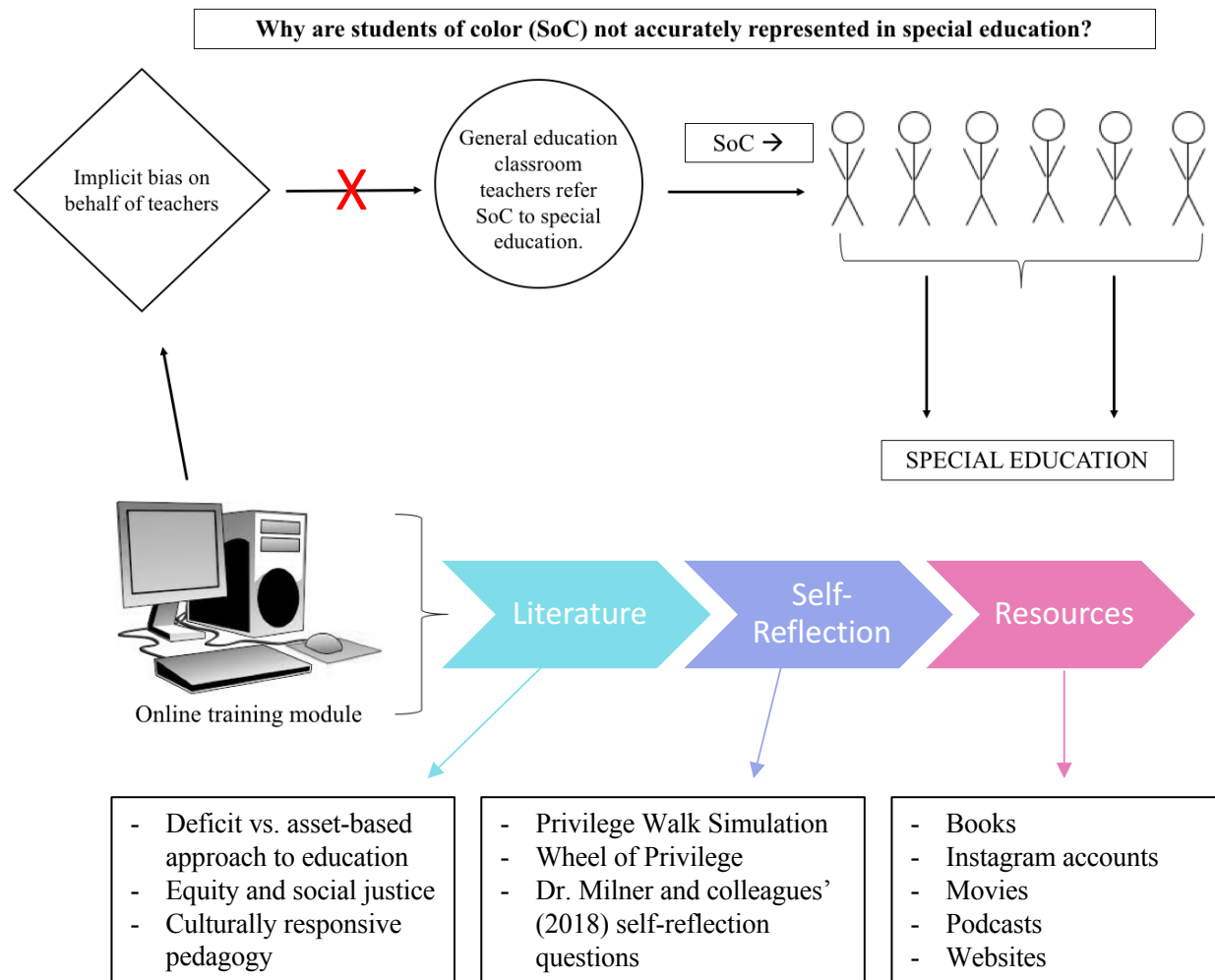
- African Americans may be overrepresented in special education, but these students are also significantly overrepresented in the category of emotional disturbance (ED) (Wiley, Brigham, Kauffman & Bogan, 2013).
- SoC may actually be underrepresented in special education (Arnold & Lassmann, 2003; Morgan, Farkas, Cook, Strassfeld, Hillemeier, Pun & Schussler, 2017).
- There is misrepresentation of SoC in special education.
- One potential factor leading to misrepresentation is *educator bias* (Wiley et al., 2013; Matias, 2013; Hosp & Reschly, 2004; Kincaid, Kincaid, & Sullivan, 2017; Echevarria, Powers & Elliott, 2004).

## RESEARCH QUESTION

- How can we support educators, especially general education teachers, to limit the over referral of students of color for special education?

## DESIGN

Online professional development learning module for educators (administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals) to interrogate their own biases.



## OBSERVATIONS FROM CONTEXT

- School partnership site has 500 students, 47% of which are White, 44% are Black, 4.8% Hispanic, 3.6% Asian and 0.2% Native American; however, 12/13 students on a special education teacher's caseload are Black (about 92% of students receiving special education services)

## RESEARCH THAT HAS INFORMED DESIGN

- "I can re-watch certain sections [if] I need more understanding."
- 77.8% of survey respondents wanted a list of future resources and 88.9% highlighted the importance of learning new information
- 8/9 survey respondents could stay focused on an online professional development module for at least 30 minutes
  - Five respondents said they could stay focused for an hour or more, especially if the information was chunked